



Department of Justice

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MONTANA MAN SENTENCED FOR RECEIPT AND POSSESSION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

BILLINGS – Joseph Vern Lenhart, a 28-year-old resident of Worden, was sentenced today to a term of 60 months in federal prison in connection with his guilty plea to receipt and possession of child pornography. Lenhart was also ordered to pay a special assessment of \$200 and will be under supervision for 5 years..

In an Offer of Proof filed by the United States, the government stated it would have proved at trial the following:

In January of 2006, the Billings FBI Office received a report that Lenhart had received and possessed child pornography via the Internet using his home computers.

When questioned, Lenhart admitted that he used his personal computers to acquire child pornography via the Internet, mainly using a file sharing program. Lenhart further admitted that he knew that receipt and possession of child pornography was illegal.

Images of child pornography were found on Lenhart's computers when examined by the FBI.

Because there is no parole in the federal system, the "truth in sentencing" guidelines mandate that Lenhart will likely serve **all** of the time imposed by the court. In the federal system, Lenhart does have the opportunity to earn a sentence reduction for "good behavior." However, this reduction will not exceed 15% of the overall sentence.

The investigation was a cooperative effort between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Assistant United States Attorney Marcia K. Hurd prosecuted the case.

"This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales created Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys' Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/."

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